RELIGION AT HARVARD

A Harvard Student Council
Committee Report

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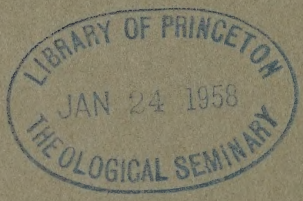

Harvard University. Student Council.
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CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

FEBRUARY 1956

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
Foreword by the President of the Student Council		i
Acknowledgments		ii
Introduction		iii
Chapter I	Religion and Liberal Education: The Idea of Commitment	4
Chapter II	Religious Attitudes in Harvard College	12
Chapter III	Community Religious Organizations	23
Chapter IV	Religion and the Harvard Curriculum: Analysis	27
Chapter V	Religion and the Harvard Curriculum: Recommendations	34
Summary		38

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HARVARD STUDENT COUNCIL
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We are pleased to have ready for the University another report of the Harvard Student Council. The place of religious thought at Harvard and the influence of the College on religious faith has been a topic of interest almost since its establishment, but particularly in recent years has renewed interest been evidenced. We hope that this report will be a stimulus and source of information to the faculty and administration as decisions are made affecting the role of religion in the life of the College.

No other commission was given to the members of the committee than to study religion at Harvard. They were left free to formulate the problem as they wished and to come to whatever conclusions emerged from their research. Necessarily, the final results are controversial, and we would have it no other way. But the very nature of the report, therefore, makes it impossible for the Student Council to support officially ideas which are matters of opinion and intimately connected with each man's personal outlook.

Every portion of the report has been discussed in Council meetings and in one form or another approved. All of the recommendations listed in the summary were approved without qualifications, the first one recommending a Board of Religious Advisers by a very slim margin, the others by slightly larger majorities. The remainder of the report was accepted as "an intelligent discussion and valid expression of committee opinion on a significant undergraduate problem." While respecting the work and thought of the committee, a body so widely representative as the Student Council could expect to arrive at no greater consensus.

Nonetheless, we believe the report to have merit and commend it to the University for careful consideration.

Edward M. Abramson
President

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the course of our study, the committee consulted with a number of professors and virtually all the ministers to students in Harvard Square. Most of these men aided by sharing their views on religion and liberal education. Others helped directly with developing methods for conducting the study. To all we are grateful. We cannot mention each individually, but we do wish to acknowledge specifically our indebtedness to the professors who joined us for dinner.

In every case our views differ in some respect from theirs, but each one contributed by dialectic or instruction to our conclusions. These were Professors Henry D. Aiken of the Philosophy Department, Samuel Beer of the Government Department, Reuben D. Brower of the English Department, Edwin C. Kemble of the Physics Department, Phillippe E. LeCorbeiller of the Applied Physics Department and Robert Ulich of the School of Education. Mr. Ted Wilcox of the Bureau of Study Counsel also sat in with us on one occasion.

We learned from Dr. George Buttrick, head of the Memorial Church, something of the scope of our undertaking and Professor Gordon W. Allport counseled us on the formulation of our questionnaire. We are, of course, fully responsible for the methods we used.

A large number of undergraduates and some graduates took part in our forum and we wish to thank them for their participation. They were William Cadbury, Linden Cole, Peyton Conger, Doyle Fosso, Neil Hastie, Allen Hollis, William Pennell, Morris Sherman, Will Towne, Bruce Wetzel and Kenneth Williamson.

Other undergraduates helped in various phases of the work, particularly in distributing and analyzing the questionnaire: Jack Kennedy, Robert Learner, Richard Rosenberg, Frank Wong.

President Nathan M. Pusey has from time to time given encouragement to the committee as well as contributing stimulating ideas.

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INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 1954 the Harvard Student Council organized a committee to write a report on religion in the College. Eight men representing various religious views were chosen, and throughout the year we met together every week to discuss the problem. Meanwhile, individually, each man gathered facts about some phase of religion in the Harvard community which he reported to the group. This report is the result of our research and deliberations.

For many years the administration in Harvard College has agreed to hear the views of the Student Council before making any major changes in educational policy. In addition to studying immediate issues facing the administration, however, the Council often has initiated studies of its own which to a greater or lesser extent have influenced policy changes. In the present case, while there have been important moves made to strengthen the place of religious thinking in the College, none of these was the result of an issue posed, debated, and decided upon by the faculty or administration. Therefore, the committee was not appointed to comment on a specific change in policy. Its formation was more the result of a widespread feeling that the position of religious thinking in the intellectual life of the College was changing. All in all the time seemed ripe for a student group to reexamine the fundamental connection between religious thinking and liberal education and to see how this connection, if there is one, is worked out at Harvard.

Throughout all of our discussions we were constantly aware of the peculiar position of such a study at Harvard College, with its intensely religious origins and its clear break with religion in the last century. Moreover we felt ourselves on the wave of renewed religious interest sweeping the country which was bound to color our thinking and might have to be discounted from our conclusions. It was apparent that our report to be fully significant would have to be viewed against the background of the history of religion in the College and of the recent developments affecting and reflecting changing attitudes toward religion.

Religion was centrally important at the University's founding. Born with the rigorous religious restrictions of seventeenth century New England, the "colledge at Newtowne" got its first large gift from a young minister—John Harvard—in 1638. For instance, one regulation in 1643 was "Every schollar shall be present in his Tutor's Chamber at the seventh houre in the morning, immediately after the sound of the bell, at his opening the scripture and prayer. So also at the fifth houre at night, and then give account of his own private reading in the scriptures." Even in such a seemingly pious atmosphere, religion was a matter of controversy. The college's first president, Henry Dunster, was forced to resign because of his doubts about the validity of infant baptism. Cotton Mather, a later president, wrote of him, "he fell into the briers of Antipadedo baptism." It is important to note, nonetheless, that controversy in these early days was restricted to sectarian beliefs and varying interpretations of basically orthodox creeds. The importance, and indeed, the central place, of religion was assumed.

Later, eighteenth century rationalism had its day at Harvard, even though the University and, in fact, the country as a whole, lagged behind the European movement. By the end of the century liberal Unitarianism was becoming more and more important and increasingly associated with the name of the college in Cambridge. Names of liberal thinkers and theologians such as William Ellery Channing, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Theodore Parker, and others recall many tales of religious controversy in the early nineteenth century. College records, letters of admission and applications to the University from this period indicate the growing split between the more conservative elements and the various wings

of the liberal movement. John L. Sibley, nineteenth century librarian of the College and author of the noted "Harvard Graduates," writes in his diary on July 28, 1874, ". . . . quite a sharp controversy with some persons who are trying to dissuade the H's from letting their son come to Harvard University. The real but concealed objection being the religious sentiments there. Some people said that the Institution was sectarian and that its principal purpose was to make Unitarians, who were worse than Infidels as they do not come out and proclaim their creed." Still, in spite of the controversy, the importance of religion itself was assumed.

Perhaps the first premonition of the modern-day questioning of the very existence of religion in a free college campus arose in the series of college tussles leading up to the abolishment of required daily chapel in 1886. President Eliot writes in his report of 1872-75 when the enlarging of Appleton Chapel caused chapel services to be dropped for several months, "The Faculty . . . tried, quite involuntarily, an interesting experiment in college discipline, partly as a morning roll-call and partly as a means of enforcing continous residence . . . the omission of morning prayers for nearly five months, at the time of year when the days are shortest and coldest, had no ill effects whatever on college order or discipline."

Now that it was apparent that morning prayers were unnecessary to keep order, many were still anxious to influence as many undergraduates as possible to attend chapel services even if the requirements should be lifted. One professor proposed that chapel be made an unprepared elective in order to increase its appeal. Opposing such a plan, a student sarcastically wrote, "Only those studious minded young men who go to college for work or are conscientiously opposed to set times for prayer would be likely to choose mathematics or German instead of prayers; and these probably have least need of the prayers . . . no preparation at all is *required* for prayers and it therefore will be a particularly easy elective." Finally, then, in 1886, the attendance requirement was dropped. Since then there has been no formal religious compulsion at the University.

Also since that time, religion has largely shifted for itself at Harvard. Although Phillips Brooks house was dedicated in 1900 in the wake of the liberal Bishop's interest in undergraduate religious activity, and while Memorial Church was built in the 1920's, *laissez faire* has seemed to characterize both administrative policy and undergraduate interest. President Eliot's administration, as we have seen, saw the last formal religious requirements; Eliot himself had interest in religion mainly for its social value; Lowell, although interested in Memorial Church, had no compelling interest in the religious affairs of the school. President Conant gave no special attention to religion and by the end of World War II Harvard's spiritual, or at least religious, condition was not very vigorous. On the graduate level, the Divinity School was losing prestige. Phillips Brooks House had strayed far from its underlying religious principles. The preacher at Memorial Church, because of responsibility at the Divinity School, could not spend sufficient time at the Church. Finally, the religious complexion of the student body had radically changed. Such a state of affairs religiously was bound to produce change of some sort, for "better" or for "worse." As it was, a man vitally interested in religious problems took over the Presidency, when Nathan Marsh Pusey was elected in June 1953.

The current wave of religious interest had already had its beginnings in the last few years of President Conant's administration when the decision to renovate the Divinity School was made and when Provost Buck formed a committee to investigate the state of religion on the campus. President Pusey's election has given it impetus. The prospects of a "new center of religious learning" at Harvard, the revitalization of Memorial Church, reorganization of Phillips Brooks House, the popularity of the new courses in religion, and the President's own frequent endorsements of religious activity here—combined with in-

creased religious stimulation from outside forces—caused the Student Council to form this committee.

With all these developments bursting upon the College and with the promise of more in the offing, the committee felt that a basic reassessment of how religion fits into liberal education was our foremost responsibility. Without some such understanding we felt incapable of evaluating any suggested changes in policy or recommending any of our own.

At the same time, we felt a need for facts about where religion stands today in the Harvard community. Many experiences inside and outside of the Yard affect the religious life of Harvard students and it was clearly necessary to consider as many as we could. Consequently, a survey was made of the activities and impact of religious organizations in the immediate Cambridge community; of the status of religious thinking in course work; and of the attitudes of undergraduates to fundamental religious questions.

To form a picture of undergraduate religious attitudes we sent questionnaires to undergraduates in every class, requesting information on some of their basic attitudes toward religion. To broaden the limited perspectives of the committee members, forum meetings were held with representatives of many religious viewpoints participating. This group of about twenty-five men nominated by the College religious organizations, along with men chosen from the College at large, included all shades of belief and unbelief. Large questions were posed to them, and, particularly in the early stages of our work, they contributed a great deal to our outlook. Later in the year, professors from different fields with a scattering of religious and non-religious beliefs joined us for dinner in what proved to be the most stimulating part of our project. Other professors were interviewed in their offices and, finally, ministers to students in churches in Cambridge were visited to complete our survey of the Harvard scene.

With all this leaven, our conception of the problem expanded far beyond what it had been originally. Each of the committee members agreed his personal views were in some measure altered through the year, and the joint views expressed in this report can nowhere be attributed to one person. Both in conception and in composition the entire work is genuinely a committee production. All of the ideas were worked over at length in often heated discussions, and if some of them are not new, we can rightfully claim them to be our own by dint of our thorough examination and labored acceptance. In the end, each committeeman assumed part of the work of writing, and up to the last minute everyone has continued to contribute amendments and emendations.

The final form of the report is simple. The first chapter is our attempt to answer the question, "What is the connection between religion and liberal education?" With this explication of the ideal situation in a liberal university as a foundation, we go on to analyze three phases of religion at Harvard: student religious attitudes, community religious organizations, and religion in course work. At the end of two of these chapters we make recommendations for changes in policy or practice which seem to follow from our analysis. In the Summary, these recommendations are explicitly related to each other within the framework of the ideal connection of religion to liberal education laid down at the beginning.

Our concrete recommendations, we believe, have merit from the viewpoint of anyone who believes in the most commonly accepted principles of liberal education. The general philosophy expressed in the first chapter, on the other hand, is more controversial and to us more important. In this first chapter are expressed our sharpest doubts and highest hopes for liberal education. In it we present arguments for an attitude toward teaching in general, which beyond justifying the teaching of religious thought, is, in our estimation, essential to the vitality of the university. This attitude, we believe, must infuse all phases of learning if liberal education is to be, in any profound sense, significant to human life.

Chapter I

RELIGION AND LIBERAL EDUCATION
THE IDEA OF COMMITMENT

Liberal Education

For the better part of two terms our committee came together weekly for extended dinner meetings. At first, our job was to define the scope of our investigation and then to assign responsibilities; but when the committee machinery began to roll smoothly the majority of our time was spent in discussing the relationship between religion and liberal education. The following pages record the results of our discussions, but they cannot recreate the discussions themselves. There is no way to indicate the buoyant optimism with which the group attacked the problem, nor the depressing pessimism which followed when, half-way through our labors, we fully realized the magnitude of the problem with which we were faced, and the many significant differences of opinion which had been buried in inadequately defined generalizations. Nor can we record the alternating cycles of enthusiasm and despair which attended the committee's work. The following pages contain, perhaps, more than we dared to expect but less than we might have hoped. On certain points we were unable to reach a common conclusion and the reader will only find stated the various alternatives over which we struggled.

It must be admitted that in one way the committee was not representative; from the start each member shared in what might be called a pro-religious "bias." We all felt instinctively that there should be a relationship between religion and liberal education. Although in the forum one or two members contributed greatly by questioning and even attacking our basic assumptions, in our committee meetings we lacked a "devil's advocate" and the skeptical or atheistic viewpoint was left unrepresented.

The committee felt that its first job was to reach an agreement about the unique content and purpose of liberal education. To this end, each member studied the Harvard Report, *General Education in a Free Society*, and other relevant material, most notably, A. N. Whitehead's *The Aims of Education*. On the basis of our reading and subsequent discussions, we formulated the following statement of our thoughts on liberal education without any consideration of their religious implications.

Liberal Education is an imaginative consideration of learning which has as its purpose the fulfillment of the individual's potential and the development of an active and responsible attitude to life.

The Imaginative Consideration of Learning

Liberal education is a joint confrontation by the student and teacher of those issues, ideas, and discoveries which have made a difference in mens' lives. It involves an investigation of those convictions which have motivated their action and the ideals to which they have been committed, viewed from an historical perspective. But it is equally a consideration of man's continuing need for an ideal, his quest for Truth, seen as a vital and personal problem affecting the student in all phases of his own life.

We have chosen this phrase of Alfred North Whitehead's to describe such an encounter because it suggests an attitude which we appreciate. The role of the teacher is that of a catalyst, and it is precisely because of this that the term 'imaginative" applies to his function. His job is to effect the contact between the student and the subject matter, his

method and his responsibility is to foment those "moments of heightened insight, rare experiences of great excitement," of which Mr. Pusey speaks. It is in such moments that the relevancy of education to life becomes apparent, and it is the influence of such teachers which engenders that enthusiasm for education in the broadest sense—the realization that these issues and ideas still do make a difference.

However, the student will not long live in an academic community, and will rarely, after graduation, have the benefit of such a teacher. He will either have to confront these issues without the benefit of a catalyst or admit that they really are not relevant after all. If joint confrontation is the process, individual confrontation is the goal. "Rare experiences of great excitement," then, are not enough, and liberal education has the greater responsibility of producing disciplined and creative minds, capable of confronting ideas and issues alone.

The Fulfillment of Individual Potential

Not only is the individual different from his neighbors, he is something in *himself*. It is very much the job of a liberal education to encourage in each person the discovery of this "something," and then to stimulate that self-confidence which will enable him to utilize his gifts to his own best advantage and that of others. Wtihout self-discovery the person cannot adjust himself in either time or space; the issues and ideals which he must confront remain abstractions. Without self-confidence, original and creative thinking tends to remain unformulated and unarticulated, of no use to anyone. Within the context of personality, however, creative thinking becomes a force and can be the basis for those decisions which, ideally, each must make. Liberal education, then, should strive to develop the man who is at home with himself, who can adjust to situations when adjustment is required, but who is not afraid or unable to look inward for that authority which he must follow. This is the man who is ready to "elect for life."

The Development of an Active and Responsible Attitude to Life

If man is to be free he must *want* to be free, and must constantly reassert this choice. In a society which purports to be free, responsibility gives to "freedom" an often-overlooked positive implication. Each man must be willing and able to make those fundamental decisions which shape his life. These fundamental decisions constitute the most profound commitment a man can make. The terms are an individual matter, but the necessity is universal. As men have constantly striven for the Truth, so must each strive to make the Truth, as he sees it, applicable to his own life. Liberal education cannot prescribe the conditions of the Good Life, but the individual who is its product can. This seems to be important. To us, it is so important that we consider it the culmination and summation of education.

The Nature and Content of Commitment

The religious orientation of the committee is unmistakably evident in the above statement, especially in section three in which the terms "Truth" and "Commitment" are used, perhaps a little recklessly. The committee was soon aware that it had not discussed these concepts adequately, and many additional hours were spent thrashing over the idea of commitment. To some members, "Commitment" had an exclusively religious connotation. They felt that the only true and lasting commitment was a God-centered one. Others gave the term a broader construction and felt that commitment was not necessarily defined by its content. To these, the value of commitment lies in the act itself, in the dedication of

the individual to a principle or set of principles, whatever they might be.

We all agree that commitment is an active, personal affirmation of ultimate worth. It is *active* in that it it affects one's everyday response in a consistent manner; *personal* as opposed to socially demanded; it is an *affirmation* which is consciously understood; *ultimate* as opposed to instrumental or temporary; it is concerned with *worth* in that it is a judgement of value rather than fact. Thus Commitment embodies, for us both intellectual grasp of meaning and emotional adherence to value.

Commitment is important to a man's full development. It calls forth the best in him, overcoming the lethargy of indecision and the confusion of unclear goals. Psychologically, it invigorates and empowers. By giving significance to knowledge, commitment heightens the excitement of ideas in a way unknown to the individual lacking deeply felt values. In short, it is the link between academic learning and purposeful living.

The idea of commitment has a central place in the theory of the liberal university. Liberal education is the education of free men, and must teach men how to be free. The free man must be able to discern and evaluate independently, and this is impossible without some basic understanding of ultimate worth. Unless he has conceptions of worth which he has chosen, his judgments will be based on standards imposed from without and he is not free. An unclear understanding of ultimate ends is frequently the cause of the misuse of means; this is as true in private as in public life. Only the man who understands the roots of his own thinking and has investigated the assumptions of his judgments can be counted on to act responsibly, and only a man who understands himself in this way can act with the confidence which is part of realizing his individual potential.

We believe that the person who consciously assesses his actions and judgments in a sincere and critical way is more likely to act wisely than one who does not. This does not mean, however, that we are unaware of the real danger that self-analysis can become an obsession and a deterent to action. The formation of commitment, in a sensitive person, can lead to indecision as well as decision. Enervating self-consciousness, however, is part of the process leading to commitment, rather than an inevitable byproduct of commitment. It accompanies that inner turmoil at the time when a hierarchy of values is being established, that time of confusion which some educators feel is a valuable manifestation of liberal education. When inner discipline, the essence of commitment, is established, anxious self-analysis can cease.

The committee was very concerned with the possibility that commitment might restrict open-mindedness and close off certain areas for investigation. Historically, it is true that bigotry and blindness in individuals or groups has frequently been associated with strong commitments of one sort or another. To some members of the committee, however, narrowness and prejudice are more the result of unexamined beliefs, made strong not by comprehended commitment, but by norms enforced and reinforced by social pressures. Vicious commitments, they say, do not occur in men who examine honestly the nature of their most moving ideals and compare these fairly with the values which have motivated other committed individuals. These members feel that the greatest men of history have been strongly committed and yet have retained wide vision and broad sympathies. They have found that kind of commitment which brings the freedom of directed effort and consistent judgment, while remaining open to consideration of new evidence.

Other members maintained that it is important to discuss the content as well as the act of commitment if bigotry is to be avoided. Around the question of content centered some of our warmest discussions. We all agreed in opposing certain misplaced commit-

ments. We all could discern the difference between a Hitler and a Schweitzer and agreed which was good and which bad. However, some stated, such a distinction is a *post facto* judgment based on superimposed standards of good and evil. These members, concerned with the content of commitment, suggested that the true religious commitment, the God-centered commitment, demands openmindedness and tolerance of its adherents. They held that the conviction that absolute values do exist, but only on an ultimate plane, leads to dedication but not fanaticism.

These two positions were never reconciled, but, as can be seen by our statement on liberal education, the relationship of commitment to liberal education is not affected greatly by this disagreement.

Commitment and Liberal Education

To a large degree, most of an individual's values are already shaped before he arrives at college, and the four years spent there are not of primary importance in determining the moral structure of his character. Previous influences which all share, the home, the church, the school, and the human relationships derived from these institutions, seem to be the important moral influences on a person's behavior. The results of our questionnaire demonstrated that there are few "conversions" at college either to skepticism or religious faith. Perhaps, then, since the University can little affect ultimate values, it should not be concerned about commitment.

The Committee agrees that these are powerful arguments, however, we do not believe that they justify disregard of the student's thinking about fundamental issues. Traditionally, the creed of liberal education states that the unexamined life is not worth living. We wish to register a limited belief in this credo. We agree that, in most cases, men are better for having scrutinized what they hold to be true, although the power of this argument is vitiated by the multitudes of people who live happy, effective and good lives without thoughtful self-examination of the kind liberal education encourages. In any case when the student enters the university, his needs change. Once he has learned to challenge ideas and to demand rational understanding, any part of his world view which is to remain vital must survive this same kind of scrutiny. Ideas which are not examined are more likely to atrophy in an educated man than in one who has not come to appreciate the standards of disciplined thinking. If a student is to retain a living commitment, the university must expose him to new possibilities for commitment, or enable him to examine and understand the ideas he brings with him in the light of new knowledge. A traditional sense of worth which has ossified or decayed and is not part of a person's effective intellectual equipment cannot be termed a commitment.

Course work can enliven a student's sense of the importance of questions of ultimate meaning, and introduce him to the thinking of other men who have dealt with the same problems. It can open up new alternatives and strike the issues more sharply. A broader view of the world and the forces at play in it can give life and significance to profound questions which otherwise remain abstract and academic. The results of our questionnaire demonstrated students' concern about questions of ultimate value; if disciplined thinking is ever to be of help, it should be able to assist in these problems which are of great personal relevance. Fundamental beliefs can be affected by rational argument, and, according to the questionnaire, many students are aware of some change of this nature taking place. For all these reasons, course work should not be considered negligible in its effect on the deepest thinking of the undergraduate. While it may not affect established habits, we believe that in the long run, any basic shift in his view of the world stimulated by academic work will be traced in decisions he makes, and will shape the direction of his growth.

Moreover, the new beliefs generated here are not formed altogether haphazardly. While many faiths are discussed in the class room, the University nurtures a vague but pungent faith of its own. This undefined credo is the joint product of the strong minds which compose the heart of the University, minds still at work and others which have made their contributions and passed from the scene. It is a product both of contemporary progress and traditional accumulation. Today it can be characterized roughly as humanitarian, democratic, and scientific; but no matter how general it is, anyone who lives in this community for four years imbibes of it. The total impact of experience at Harvard does recommend certain values. It does not leave entirely formless in the hands of students, the materials for the creation of the Good Life.

If the University can play a part in the development of the commitment sof its students, what is to be its course? How can it achieve the aims of liberal education as we conceive them? Before discussing these questions, it is necessary to specify what is meant by the term "University." It is often referred to, in books of educational theory, as a mystical corporate body that in some undefined fashion communicates one thing or another. We do not deny that there is a spirit or ethos about the University that, in some ways, is more important than the actions of any one group, but for the purposes of this discussion we would like to treat it as a collection of groups of individuals with certain functions, and address ourselves to each of them in turn. The natural division consists of three groups: the administration, the faculty, and the students.

The Administration

By the administration we refer to the President, the Deans, the department heads, and the Faculty when it sits as a body; in short, all the policy makers and executives. The administration can affect liberal education in three essential ways: by the subject matter it chooses to offer in courses, by the kinds of men it appoints to be teachers, and by the relationships it contrives between students and teachers.

In *General Education in a Free Society*, the University departs from an earlier belief that its primary aim is to gather a body of scholars who can seek truth in an unfettered way, and that pedagogic functions are of secondary importance. While not negating the importance of the scholar's quest, the Harvard Report recommends that the University take a positive hand in determining the content of courses offered to students. The Report states that students should be introduced to the humanitarian and democratic tradition of western civilization, and should gain skill in the art of disciplined and critical thinking. These aims have shaped the General Education program at Harvard, as well an many departmental offerings.

We would add to these aims of the University the importance of teaching radical thinking in the classical sense of the word; thinking that goes to the root and uncovers the fundamental assumptions of man's thought. Too often critical thinking, at least as interpreted by undergraduates, merely looks for logical flaws. Radical thinking emphasizes the importance of understanding and evaluating the bases on which a logical structure is built. This concept is not disregarded in the Harvard Report, but we wish to emphasize it. We believe that all types of thought eventually arrive at the point where an assumption must be accepted on faith, and this boundary should be fully explored. Only then can he examine the inner structure of his thought. In this connection, all courses and fields can contribute to the student's search for a fundamental commitment. Insofar as he understands both the substructure and superstructure of a particular world view, he is able to make an intelligent and enduring commitment.

If the University accepts the importance of thinking about the ultimate meaning of

life, religion certainly deserves a place in the curriculum. In the first place, religious thought deals directly with questions of faith and ultimate meaning. It recommends an overarching scheme of life that lends significance to much of man's experience, and suggests criteria which divide good and evil. The University need not endorse religious truth any more than it officially stamps its approval on any other claimant to truth. However, the fact that religion treats life whole, and proposes conceptions of ultimate worth which have vitalized the thinking and lives of many, suggest it as an effective avenue for approaching ultimate questions. A large portion of undergraduates feel that they need some sort of religious orientation in order to achieve a fully mature philosophy of life. More than sixty percent of the people answering our questionnaire expressed this view. Since undergraduates are concerned about these questions, to neglect them is to fail to apply education at a point where disciplined thought is most clearly desired and needed.

Our argument at this stage is not for courses on religion as such, but as a means by which radical thinking can be encouraged. We recommend courses in religion because they seem to provide a natural and easy way of approaching fundamental questions and stimulating students to consider the relevance of their education to their lives. Probably some courses on religion might never approach this level of thought. A course in textual criticism, for instance, might never get beyond the techniques of biblical scholarship. Although it can be recommended on its own merits, such a course would not serve the purpose at hand; it would not talk about those elements which compose a commitment to ultimate worth.

Courses approach subject matter in this radical way only if the teacher is himself profound. The administration vitally affects the level of thinking of the undergraduate through the kind of men it appoints to its faculty. For most students, the way in which a subject is presented is of equal, and perhaps greater importance, than the subject matter itself. Certainly all faculty members do not have to be philosophers or even profound in every case, but the presence of many men on the faculty who are personally concerned about questions of ultimate value and meaning stimulates students to consider seriously the same questions.

Finally, the faculty-student relationships which the structure of the University encourages have a bearing on the likelihood of students thinking deeply with personal enthusiasm about profound questions. One of the most exciting educational experiences of an undergraduate comes when he is infected with some of the passion with which a professional scholar regards his subject. A rare professor can transmit this across the lecturn. More frequently it is communicated in tutorial or in personal discussions between the teacher and student. Most professors are radical thinkers in the best sense of the word. Most of them have a personal commitment, but this is rarely realized by the undergraduate who sees them only when they are trying to be "objective." Consequently, students frequently receive the impression that this noncommited, objective stance is the only one that is scholarly and scientific. They may think that they should try to maintain it all of the time, even when commitment is in order. If the University can arrange for undergraduates to know their professors more informally, students will learn that the life of the mind can be fruitfully integrated with the life of the spirit.

The Faculty

Most of what has been discussed thus far among the measures the administration can take to help students think radically aims at turning up the fundamental issues which form the intellectual content of commitment. More important in the formation of a strong and purposeful commitment is an emotional involvement which lends force and endurance

to the choice of the mind. In this connection, the human, psychological aspects of a mature man teaching younger men have an important bearing. Professors represent values which most undergraduates rank highly: intelligence and erudition. They are usually personally admirable men, and in the class room they often stand as unchallenged experts in the subjects they are discussing. As authorities in their fields their judgments are highly respected, if not accepted as final pronouncements of absolute truth.

While some teachers may despair that such a non-intellectual relationship exists with their students, nonetheless it is there. Realistically, then, the problem facing each teacher is how to use this influence so that it becomes a positive force and one that does not strangle independent thought. From this problem we evolve the truly crucial question: how can the professor make the materials of his course relevant to the lives of his students?

We do not believe that the teacher should explain openly the importance of commitment at crucial points of the course. If the importance of what he is saying is not implied by the evidence and reasoning he brings to bear, then any exhortation will be shrugged off. Furthermore, it may be dangerous to assert the importance of decision about a specific issue. If this need is underscored strenuously, some students will cast about desperately for an answer to the problems raised by the professor and accept a solution which is not really their own. This solution, not being autonomous, is compelling only as long as no greater outward force is brought to bear, and it cannot really be called the commitment of a free man. The teacher should encourage students to come to grips with large issues by demonstrating their relevance to life, but he need not admonish them. This distinction is part of the difficult difference between preaching and teaching.

The professor must decide whether his own viewpoint or opinion shoud be made explicit. We think that it is important that the teacher's position be made known, although an unnatural confession of faith is certainly not necessary, and his personal position is relevant only if it is closely connected with the subject matter of the course. It is indeed possible that if the teacher reveals his own position, he will bend all the immature minds in the class room to conform to his thinking. The best way to avoid this danger and to make it possible for undergraduates to think independently, is not to be objective where objectivity is actually impossible, but to label opinion as opinion and encourage independent judgment by providing a balance of conflicting views.

The so-called objective stance carries the further danger touched on before. If suspended judgment is connected with a scholarly approach, students may remain suspended until they leave the academic community, and then revert to earlier social norms or unthinkingly adopt new ones offered them by the society they enter. Lives of professors as much as their thought influence the actions of students. If it is known that teachers have made commitments, albeit intelligently and in the light of many options, then students are likely to make sound independent commitments in the same way.

Perhaps the most crucial way in which a teacher can affect the thinking of his students is in the organization of the course material. This is especially true in the broad survey courses which liberal arts colleges are increasingly adopting to meet the needs of liberal education. Indeed, it is to this type of course that our remarks are especially directed, for, as the questionnaire indicates, it is in this type of course that the vastness and scope of human achievement is presented to the student. Usually, such courses are offered to students in their first years at college, when not only the ideas are new, but the idea of thinking about them is also new. In most elementary humanities courses at Harvard, instructors employ the historical method of presenting material. This has many advantages, but also an important disadvantage.

While it is true that this is the most efficient way of demonstrating the development of western civilization, and the evolution of modern consciousness, the historical method tends, by its nature, to separate the great achievements of the past from the student. Because it is treated as a stepping-stone, a great work of literature is not presented in its immediacy to the student. We feel that such a work should not only be understood for its value in a past historical context, but for its significance to human existence outside of any certain time. It must be understood in its own terms and in its relationship to universal human values. Great ideas, the creations of men's minds and spirits are as much alive today as in the time of their origin, and their continuing vital nature should be appreciated by students. The professor should make every effort to organize his course in such a way that the relevancy of the material is apparent. Only in this way does education become the imaginative consideration of learning.

The Student

Commitment must finally be personal. Each student must seek his own. The faculty and administration can give some understanding of the elements out of which commitments are formed by presenting alternative avenues to the Good Life. However, the final responsibility rests with the student. Only he can relate course work to personal experience. Only he can choose. By perceiving the issues which are of universal significance to human existence, the lives and thoughts of other men and other times become useful to him as he strives to lead an active and responsible life.

Hard thought on questions of ultimate value is required of each. While commitments are made carefully, slowly, and often painfully, the educated man will not be afraid of them. The alternatives presented to him are many and varied. Thoughtful learning and radical thinking will enable him to relate his education to himself, and he will have a growing sense of purpose and direction as he makes the fundamental decisions around which his life is shaped.

Chapter II

RELIGIOUS ATTITUDES IN HARVARD COLLEGE

In our study of religious attitudes in Harvard undergraduates, we chose three questions around which to organize our questionnaire. They seemed to cover some of the most important areas of religious thought and feeling. The questions we asked were the following:

1. At the present time, do you find yourself deeply concerned with questions as to the *ultimate meaning of your life?*
2. In your life, how important are those moments of personally moving spiritual insight which might be called "*religious experience?*"
3. How important to you are questions about the *existence and nature of God?*

These were the frame of the questionnaire. Around them we constructed questions designed to find out how important these subjects are to undergraduates, if Harvard increases or decreases students' interest in religion, and what factors shape religious attitudes.

The mimeographed questionnaires were distributed in person to students chosen at random from all of the houses and the Yard. This was done about the middle of the spring semester, 1955. Unfortunately, we were unable to poll the commuters. Of the 190 questionnaires distributed, 150 were returned. Perhaps this incomplete return will increase slightly the percentage of answers from students interested in religion, but there is no compelling reason to think the sample's random nature is seriously disturbed. The complete questionnaire with the percentage of responses to each answer is found at the end of this chapter. The numbers in parentheses throughout this chapter like (question 16) refer to question numbers on the actual questionnaire.

The results were tallied and correlated on the IBM machines, and then we asked questions of the data about the religious attitudes of Harvard undergraduates.

1. What is the level of interest in religious questions?
2. What is the nature of interest in religion?
3. What is the total effect of Harvard on religious beliefs?
4. What is the relation to religious attitudes of church attendance, discussions with room-mates, and course work?

We recognize the fallibilities of our instrument, but within the limits of accuracy of the questionnaire, the facts emerging from the study lead to some interesting and sometimes striking conclusions.

The Level of Religious Interest

The importance of religion to the thinking of college students has often been debated. The evidence we have accumulated can be taken for either side of the case depending on the viewpoint. The strongly religious person, for instance, might call the situation deplorable. Someone less concerned with religion could consider Harvard unusually sympathetic to religion.

The facts are these. When asked if they required some form of religious orientation or belief in order to achieve a fully mature philosophy of life, 60% of the students answering said yes, and 23% said no (question 2). In answer to question, "At the present time, do you find yourself deeply concerned with questions as the the ultimate meaning of your life?" (question 3), 56% said such questions were a "pressing concern" or that they

were "quite concerned", and 9% were "not at all" concerned. Questions about the nature and existence of God were of "very great" or of "considerable" importance to 79% of the students answering and of "little or no" importance to 19% (question 12). Religious experiences were of "very great" or of "considerable" importance to 50% and of "little or no" importance to 45% (question 8).

From the viewpoint of our committee, these figures revealed a surprisingly large amount of religious interest at Harvard. Admittedly, in the question which asks if the student feels a need for religious orientation in his philosophy of life, the word "religion" becomes very slippery and could fit a wide range of outlooks. But the fact remains that a large proportion of students want something they call religion in their philosophies of life.

Perhaps more interesting is the light these results shed on the current revival of religion. In 1947 Professor Allport asked exactly this same question of students in a large survey course he was teaching in the Social Relations Department: "Do you feel that you require some form of religious orientation or belief in order to achieve a fully mature philosophy of life?" The response in favor of a religious belief at that time was 68%.* Among the students we questioned, 60% said Yes, not a considerable difference. Perhaps the current wave of religious interest began earlier than 1947, but as measured by this question, there has been no marked increase among students since that time. Considering all the apparent increase in religious thinking, it is hard to believe that there has been no change of any sort since 1947. We interpret these results as indicating that the number of people with a religious outlook has not changed since then. At the same time, it seems clear from everyday experience that religious beliefs of late have become more lively, and religious people talk about their ideas more. Perhaps religious beliefs even reach deeper in students today, but we have no evidence of this.

The Nature of Religious Interest

We were interested to find out just what the word "religious" means to students. In other words, what is the nature of religious interests? It is apparent that participation in organized religion during the school year is not necessarily a part of religion for undergraduates. Of the students who said they needed a religious orientation, only 40% attend church frequently. This same religious group was not unusually concerned with ultimate meaning nor overly sensitive to religious experience. The same number of them were just "somewhat" concerned as found ultimate meaning a "pressing" concern. Their pattern varied little from the non-religious group. The religious students indicated more responsiveness to spiritual experiences than the others, but here again there were almost as many who found them to be of "little or no" importance as of "very great" importance.

Where the religious group stands out is in their interest in questions about the nature and existence of God. This table points up the pattern of answers among those who said they needed some form of religious orientation in their mature philosophies of life in comparison to those who said they did not need religion.

"How important to you are questions about the existence and nature of God?"

	Religious Students	Non-religious students
Very great importance	61%	21%
Little or no importance	7%	47%

* Gordon W. Allport, James M. Gillespie, Jacqueline Young, "The Religion of the Post-War College students," reprint by the Hazen Foundation from "The Journal of Psychology," 1948, 25, p.10.

Clearly, interest in this question is one characteristic distinguishing religious students from the non-religious.

The significance of this fact is better understood when it is contrasted to lack of interest in religious experience among undergraduates in general. Of all the students answering our questionnaire 45% found moments of "spiritual insight" of "little or no" importance, while only 19% attached no importance to questions about God (question 8). Furthermore, the comments under the question on spiritual experience interpreted it as intellectual almost as often as mystical. Students mentioned the sudden appearance of an answer to a problem, or a flash of insight which helped them in one stroke to comprehend a situation.

The meaning of this contrast is not hard to discern. Questions about the existence and nature of God are, in one regard at least, intellectual; religious experiences are emotional. There are few examples of religious mystics among the faculty or students, but arguments for the existence of God are frequently discussed in the classroom and hotly debated in bull sessions. It is to be expected in a university where rational values are stressed that the intellectual phase of religion should be prominent.

At the same time, questions about God are more than a type. They are for most people at the very heart of religion, and the religious outlook hinges on the single fact of God's existence. If a religious student is convinced that there is no such Being, a comprehensive reworking of his entire philosophy of life is called for. If God's existence is challenged, he cannot easily ignore it. Hence, his keen interest in this question.

In interpreting these results we should not forget that these questionnaires were answered while students were at college when the values of the University were most likely to be influential. Probably some Harvard students unconsciously emphasize the intellectual aspects of religion to their fellow students more than they would to themselves. These aspects, then, would be somewhat exaggerated on our questionnaire. But even if this is true, it reveals that students are trying to intellectualize their religion. The forces at work here, lead them to want to make their beliefs rational and intelligent. The concern for the nature and existence of God among religious students is probably the rational expression of a large complex of religious beliefs which more and more they are trying to intellectualize.

What significance has this conclusion for the development of commitment among college students? The difficulty in making education significant to a student is in finding a means of connecting detached academic subjects to his vital concerns. The results of our questionnaire lead us to believe that some of these concerns which make up a religious commitment are being brought into conscious scrutiny while the student is in college. As he makes an attempt to discuss them with his fellow undergraduates, he must necessarily rationalize his beliefs. Once they are to this stage they can be treated in the class room. Then course material which deals with the fundamental parts of a student's view of the world as they are represented by religious beliefs reaches these deep concerns. When intellectualized beliefs are shaped by rational inquiry, the basic values lying underneath which may not be rational are also affected. Through the religious questions which undergraduates find so interesting, teachers bring course materials to bear upon some of the most crucial issues of a student's existence. Learning thereby becomes significant and exciting, and education plays a part in forming and developing commitment at the deepest level.

The Effects of Harvard on Religious Belief

Cliches abound describing the change Harvard effects on the religious beliefs of stu-

dents. Generally it is said that the doubt and secular spirit of the College undermine faith; and a tolerant passivity if not outright skepticism replaces religious belief. Our evidence is all to the contrary. Our findings indicate that while religious belief is not inculcated, neither is it diluted, nor does passivity towards religious questions result from experience at Harvard.

On all the questions which measure religious interest (questions 1, 2, 3, 8 and 12) there is negligible difference in the response from class to class except for the juniors (class of 1956).* However, except for their responses on one of the questions, the juniors are not outside the general pattern. Of greatest interest here is the absence of significant increase or decrease in religious interest from the freshman to the senior year.

Can we say, then, that Harvard effects no change? Other evidence in our poll contradicts this assertion. Answers to the questions directed at change in amount of interest both in ultimate meaning and existence and nature of God show a large portion of students with a considerable increase. Forty-three percent said their concern for the ultimate meaning of their lives had increased "very much" and 31% said it had increased "somewhat," a total of 76%! Only 6% said there was any decrease whatsoever (question 4). The same pattern appears on the responses to the query on change in concern for questions about the nature and existence of God. The concern of 27% had increased "very much" and of 29% "somewhat," a total of 56%. Only 15% said their concern had decreased at all (question 13).

On the surface of it, there is a contradiction here: there is no change in amount of interest in religious questions from the freshman to the senior year and yet students report an increase in interest since being at Harvard. Probably the explanation is not too difficult. In the very first year, students feel an increase of concern for religious questions which does not change substantially through the years. When asked if there has been a change in interest since they got here, they compared their present interest or one they felt sometime while at Harvard with their interest before arriving. In their minds it was clear that their interest had grown since arriving, whether they came just six months earlier or almost four years ago.

And what is the effect of all this increased interest in religious questions? It is definitely not destructive in the eyes of the students who answered our questionnaire. Only 8% said that the effect of their total experience at Harvard was to weaken their religious beliefs (question 21). This does not mean that there is not a skeptical spirit among Harvard students, for 25% said their skeptical attitudes were strengthened, but these according to the terms of the question, were skeptical attitudes they brought with them.

All this supports the hypothesis advanced by a number of observers of the Harvard scene, that Harvard does not have a skeptical influence, but that whatever skepticism is here among students is largely the product of their earlier lives. Certainly there is a ferment of thought. One student commented that "this is one of the best places in the world for thinking." But the thought encouraged does not prey upon religious belief. It is true that there is little development of sensitivity to religious experiences. Almost 60% of the students answering stated that Harvard had not heightened their responsiveness to moments of spiritual insight more than slightly (question 10). On the other hand, more than two-thirds of those answering claimed Harvard did not discourage their religious sensitivity (question 11). Some found attitudes of faculty and students ranging from indifference to hostility as detrimental to their religious sensitivity, but few of these comments were angry or disillusioned.

* About 75% of the Junior Class expressed the need for a religious philosophy of life as compared to near 50% for the other three classes. We cannot explain this exception other than to say it may result from the peculiarities of our sample.

The increased concern for religious topics which is generated among Harvard students might happen anywhere at this time in a young person's life. The comments of students on our questionnaire, however, credit Harvard experience with stimulating thought. At least it can be said that as the attendant of this increased attention to religious questions, Harvard does not tear down beliefs. It often reinforces the outlook students bring with them, and among these residual outlooks is a large portion of skepticism; but it rarely tears out fundamental beliefs. The most frequent response to the question on the total effect of the Harvard experience was that it helped "to restate beliefs in a more tenable religious philosophy of life."

Church Attendance

These conclusions are pointed up when we analyze the contrasting attitudes of frequent and infrequent church-goers. Of the students whose positive religious beliefs were strengthened, 83% were church-goers. In a surprising coincidence, just 83% of the students with strengthened skeptical beliefs were infrequent church-goers. Of the total of infrequent church-goers, 38% were strengthened in skepticism while 42% of all church-goers were strengthened in their religious outlook. About the same number of each group had their beliefs reshaped into a more tenable religious philosophy: 41% of the infrequent church-goers and 36% of the frequent church-goers.

Some easy conclusions appear immediately. The type of men who remain strong in their faith are those who go to church. Probably they have grown up in church activity and received religious instruction from an early age. On the other hand, those who remain skeptical do not usually go to church. Very likely they came from homes where religion was not prominent. Frequent and infrequent church-goers reshape their beliefs equally often. This data supports once more the idea that fundamental beliefs whether skeptical or religious are not the product of Harvard experience. They arise from development received before coming to College

Both of these groups, frequent and infrequent church-goers, have about the same amount of interest in the ultimate meaning of their lives. As would be expected church-goers have a much higher level of interest in religious experience. Seventy-four percent find them of "very great" or of "considerable" importance; 45% of "very great" importance alone. Just 35% of the infrequent church-goers fell in the same two categories with only 15% in the "very great" group. Church people also show a greater increase in sensitivity to religious experience, although it is not so striking. As pointed out before, this mystical phase of religion is not emphasized as a value to be sought after in the academic side of life at Harvard. In churches, however, it is discussed and presumably is a much more common experience among church people.

Interest in questions of the nature and existence of God also are more important to church-goers. A total of 93% of them think these questions to be of "very great" or of "considerable" importance as opposed to 71% of the infrequent church-goers in the same two categories. The increase in concern for these questions is also slightly greater among church members than among infrequent attenders: 62% opposed to 52%. All students are interested in this question, but church-goers have a particularly large interest for the same reason that concern is great among the group that feels a need for religious orientation in their philosophies of life. Doubts of God's existence must be met by religious people if any consistency in outlook is to be maintained. Challenges of this kind are continually met in any course on the history of thought, and they cannot help but have some personal relevance to anyone of religious persuasion.

It is hard to determine whether church-going is a cause or symptom of religious attitude.

Probably it reinforces beliefs brought to Harvard, keeps alive a sensitivity to religious experiences, and may help religiously minded students stand by their faith as their beliefs about the nature and existence of God are challenged.

Discussion with Room-mates

What other factors affect religious attitudes? Our study gives us data for testing the importance of discussion of religious subjects among room-mates. We divide students into talkers and non-talkers (question 19). By talkers we mean those who said they talk about religious questions with their room-mates "very often." These compose 25% of our sample. Non-talkers are those who discuss "rarely or never." They compose 28%. The remainder are left in the limbo of "sometimes." Generally there is little difference in the amount of talk from class to class. The freshmen talked slightly more often on the whole. Differences of viewpoint seemed to encourage talking a little, but not significantly.

The level of interest in the ultimate meaning of life was the same in both groups, but there was a lot more interest in the existence and nature of God among talkers. Of the talkers, 89% compared to 64% of the non-talkers thought this question to be of "very great" or of "considerable" importance. What may be more significant is the fact that the increase in concern for both questions is much greater among the talkers. There were 30% more of the talkers than non-talkers who showed "very much" or "somewhat" of an increase. It cannot be determined from the data if the talk causes the increased concern or if the increased concern causes the talk. The first view is supported by the fact that the factor listed most often by students as being influential in shaping their thinking about the ultimate meaning of life and the existence and nature of God is informal discussions, which for most students probably refers to "bull sessions." Our personal experience supports the idea that the views of our peers powerfully affect our own thinking.

Course Work

Coming closer now to the effect of formal factors in Harvard education upon religious attitudes, we can trace the influence of the field of concentration upon student's thinking. Throughout the data, concentration in the Humanities seems to be the most relevant factor. Students in humanities do not evidence a greater need for religious belief in their philosophies of life, nor do they appear more skeptical. What is striking is the greater amount of interest in religious questions. From 25% to 30% more humanities concentrators than either social or natural science concentrators have a "pressing" concern or are "quite" concerned with the ultimate meaning of life. Just 75% of the humanities concentrators fall in these categories, as compared to less than 50% for the other two areas. About 20% more of the humanities concentrators felt spiritual insights to be important to them personally. By the same percentage the number of humanities students outdistanced the other two areas in considering questions about the nature and existence of God to be of "very great" importance. What is striking in these figures is that while the humanities concentrators show this markedly higher level of interest, the percentage of students showing these interests in the social and natural sciences is not only lower, but in all three cases within five percentage points of one another.

The increase in interest in religious matters is almost exactly the same for all three fields. Within two or three percentage points, 75% of the students in each field had their concern for the ultimate meaning of life increase "somewhat" or "very much." The percentage who showed an increase in interest in questions about the nature and existence of God is between 53% and 63% for all fields. The increase of appreciation for religious experience is nearly the same in each field, although in this case closer to 50%. What is

significant here is not only the small differences comparatively in the amount of change among the three fields, but also the large absolute number of students in all fields who felt their concern substantially increased.

At first we thought that the humanities attracted people with initial interest in religious questions because they were clearly out in front in level of interest and yet no more of them showed an increase in interest. However, this theory must be modified when the large number of students who change in all fields is considered. We finally decided that this data demonstrates that while a large number of students in all fields sense their concern for religious questions increasing, those in the humanities reach and maintain this concern at a higher pitch. Hence the consistent evidence of more of them continuing to consider religious problems more seriously in relation to the other concerns of their lives.

The influence of humanities courses in stimulating religious thought is borne out by other evidence. In the question asking what was significant to their thinking on questions of ultimate meaning, (question 5) there were 64 marks for lower level General Education humanities courses in the columns under "very much" and "quite a bit." The lower level social science courses by way of comparison received only 25 marks. The only listing to outdo these humanities courses was informal discussions with 81 marks. In the question seeking the same information about factors significant to thinking on the nature and existence of God, the lower level humanities courses not only outdistanced all other courses by a long shot, but were even slightly ahead of informal discussion in these first two categories.

When asked to comment which courses, books, etc. affect their thinking the most, students mentioned Humanities 3 and 4 most frequently with Humanities 2 and 5 close by. *The Brothers Karamazov* and *The Plague* were the books mentioned most often.

Summary

From this examination of the data, we conclude that Harvard stimulates a good deal of thought on religious topics, particularly the intellectual facets of religion. On the whole the level of interest in religion in the College is remarkably high. Experience here does not often destroy religious faith, but it is reshaped. Skepticism among students usually does not originate after they come to Harvard, although what they bring with them may be strengthened. Apparently the most influential course work for religious attitudes is that done in the humanities in the first two years in college, and humanities concentrators generally keep up a more active concern for religious problems than other students.

To these conclusions we would add the fact that in answer to the question of what single experience at Harvard had the greatest effect on religious thinking, the most frequent reply by far mentioned some personal relationship with a teacher, student, or an individual outside the University. We have no doubt but that this data and the evidence that informal discussions are the most influential factor in thought about the ultimate meaning of life and second most for thought about the existence of God speaks for much more than our questionnaire uncovers. It is in the peculiar connections of each individual with other individuals of faith and unfaith that the deepest and most fundamental changes in the shapes of religious thinking are made.

What is the significance of these conclusions for the pedagogy of the University? Above all, they underscore the fact realized by most thoughtful observers, that college students are keenly interested in the largest questions of life: What is the meaning of existence? Is there a God? The interest in these questions cannot be ignored by educators if

they are to remain true to their most noble responsibilities. These questions are weighty and cosmic, too overwhelming for any one professor to attack definitively; nonetheless, we believe that the University as a whole must attempt to answer them. Whether in courses in religion and philosophy, or scattered amidst diverse disciplines and the lectures of many instructors, the answers proposed by our cultural inheritance must be discussed and evaluated in the living context of teaching relationships. Only if these issues, running to the core of human existence, are met honestly and openly, can liberal education aspire to the high place we hold for it in our hopes.

QUESTIONNAIRE

(The questionnaire was distributed to 190 students and 150 responses were received. All percentages are based on this figure of 150. Where the total of percentages does not equal 100%, the remainder did not respond).

The Student Council is making a study this year on the religious life of the student. We realize that this is a controversial subject, and we ask your cooperation and patience. We hope you will read over the entire questionnaire before beginning to answer it.

Your identity will remain anonymous. Do not put your name or any personally identifying remarks on this questionnaire unless it is your express wish to do so. If you wish to discuss any of these questions with a member of the committee, feel free to call any of the following:

Thank you very much.

(Names and addresses of the committee members followed)

Please circle your class in the College: 55 56 57 58

Please circle your area of concentration: Humanities Social Science Natural Science

1. Do you attend church frequently during the school year:
   - 11% Near my home
   - 29% Near Harvard Square
   - 61% Infrequently or never

2. Do you feel that you require some form of religious orientation or belief in order to achieve a fully mature philosophy of life?

   60% Yes 23% No 15% Doubtful

3. At the present time, do you find yourself deeply concerned with questions *as to the ultimate meaning of your life*?
   - 27% Such questions are a pressing concern of mine.
   - 29% I am quite concerned with such questions.
   - 34% I am somewhat concerned with such questions.
   - 9% I am not at all concerned with such questions.

Comment:

4. Would you say that your concern about the ultimate meaning of your life has *increased* or *decreased* while you have been at Harvard?
   - 43% My concern has increased very much.
   - 31% My concern has increased somewhat.
   - 18% My concern has remained about the same, with perhaps a slight increase.
   - 4% My concern has remained about the same, with perhaps a slight decrease.
   - 1% My concern has decreased somewhat.
   - 1% My concern has decreased very much.

5. To what extent have the following been significant to your thinking on these questions. (Put one check in each row.)

	very much	quite a bit	some-what	a little	not at all	X
a) Lower level Gen. Ed. Courses in the:						
Humanities	27	37	29	24	16	16
Social Sciences	8	17	38	30	29	27
Natural Sciences	6	21	25	27	43	27
b) Upper level Gen. Ed. Courses in the:						
Humanities	12	16	11	11	28	71
Social Sciences	6	11	15	14	38	64
Natural Sciences	1	8	10	9	39	81
c) Other courses	21	21	13	23	30	11
d) Specific teachers	14	14	25	22	37	37
e) Informal discussions	40	41	17	17	15	20
f) Outside reading	21	31	25	24	19	29
g) Religious or service organizations	12	11	11	19	59	37
h) Other (specify)	10	2	8	0	23	105

6. Please note specifically which courses, teachers, books, etc. have been particularly significant to your thinking on these questions.

7. What factors have hampered your exploration of these questions while you have been at Harvard? Can you think of steps which you feel might be taken to encourage their exploration? (Use reverse side if necessary.)

8. In your life, how important are those moments of *personally moving spiritual insight* which might be called "religious experience."

27% They are of very great importance.
23% They are of considerable but not primary importance.
45% They are of little or no importance.

Please Comment:

9. Would you say that your estimate as to the value of "religious experience" has *increased* or *decreased* since you have been at Harvard?

20% My estimate of their value has increased very much.
21% My estimate of their value has increased somewhat.
29% My estimate of their value has remained about the same, with perhaps a slight increase.
18% My estimate of their value has remained about the same, with perhaps a slight decrease.
5% My estimate of their value has decreased somewhat.
2% My estimate of their value has decreased very much.

10. In your opinion, has your responsiveness to moments of spiritual insight been heightened by influences experienced at Harvard? Please specify these influences, if any.

11. Have any factors in the Harvard community discouraged your religious sensitivity? Please specify these factors, if any.

12. How important to you are questions about the *existence and nature of God*?

44% They are of very great importance.
35% They are of considerable but not primary importance.
19% They are of little or no importance.

13. Has your concern for these questions *increased* or *decreased* since you have been at Harvard?

27% My concern as increased very much.
29% My concern has increased somewhat.
27% My concern has remained about the same, with perhaps a slight increase.
9% My concern has remained about the same, with perhaps a slight decrease.
6% My concern has decreased somewhat.
2% My concern has decreased very much.

Please Comment:

14. To what extent has the meaning of questions concerning the nature and existence of God been sharpened and/or enriched for you by: (Put one check in each row.)

	very much	quite a bit	some-what	a little	not at all	X
a) Lower level Gen. Ed. courses in the:						
Humanities	28	29	14	23	31	24
Social Sciences	8	19	23	27	48	28
Natural Sciences	6	16	19	24	50	34
b) Upper level Gen. Ed. courses in the:						
Humanities	10	14	4	9	42	70
Social Sciences	2	4	11	11	53	7
Natural Sciences	6	7	9	7	49	70
c) Other courses	14	14	13	11	48	49
d) Specific teachers	9	14	17	15	49	45
e) Informal discussions	21	32	25	10	30	31
f) Outside reading	15	21	22	15	35	41
g) Religious or service organizations	9	8	5	13	68	46
h) Other (Please specify)	7	3	5	0	38	95

15. Please note specifically which courses, teachers, books, etc. have been particularly significant to your thinking on these questions.

16. How do you feel that belief in God should be treated in a liberal education?

17. Under what conditions would you take a course in a religion at Harvard?

37% If I had more time.
10% If a wider choice of topics were offered.
11% If there were more men of high ability teaching courses on religion.
17% Under the present conditions.
14% Under no conditions.

18. What is your formal religious affiliation or church, if any?

19. Do you talk about religious questions with your roomates?

25% very often
45% sometimes
20% rarely
8% never

20. Do any of your roommates hold religious views which differ sharply from yours?

50% Yes 44% No

21. Would you say that your total experience at Harvard has had the effect of:

19% Strengthening positive religious beliefs you brought with you?
25% Strengthening skeptical attitudes toward religion you brought with you?
8% Weakening your positive religious beliefs?
36% Helping restate your beliefs in a more tenable religious philosophy of life?
3% No effect (write in)

22. What single experience at Harvard has had the greatest effect on your religious thinking?

Chapter III

COMMUNITY RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

Because religion at Harvard includes more than is found within the formal boundaries of the University, the committee undertook to study the place and impact of organized religious activities in the Harvard community. We have in mind primarily those groups at churches in the Square which are sponsored by particular denominations and whose principal work is with college students.

We had three objectives in this study. First, we wanted numerical data on the actual participation of Harvard-Radcliffe students in these denominational groups in order to form some idea of the influence they have in the life of the community. Second, we wished to form some idea of the types of programs available to students at the various groups. Third, we interviewed the clergymen associated with each group to determine what they considered the religious needs and problems of the student community to be. From this information we looked for possible changes in University policy which would make more valuable and effective the contribution of organized religion to education at Harvard.

The result of our inquiry into the participation of Harvard-Radcliffe students in denominational activities was the discovery that somewhat over 16% of all undergraduates have some connection each week with one of these groups. This is a conservative figure arrived at in the following manner: From the religious preference cards furnished by Phillips Brooks House we counted the number of Harvard-Radcliff students who listed an affiliation with the various denominations in 1954-55. Then in the spring we asked clergymen and the presidents of the student groups to estimate the average weekly attendance in all parts of their program. Such figures are obviously difficult to estimate, but when we were given different figures by the clergy and group presidents, we invariably took the smaller. Seven groups were included in our survey; these are all the religious organizations attracting primarily Harvard and Radcliffe students with the exception of the Methodists and the Unitarians. The Methodists were in process of reorganization when our research was done and we could not reach the Unitarians.

The data obtained allows us to compute two important percentages. First, we may form an estimate of the success of the various groups at reaching their "potential" membership as indicated by the religious preference cards. For groups whose potential membership was over 500 we found that approximately 15% of the potential membership was active every week. For the smaller groups with potential memberships of less than 200, the average weekly participation was about 30%. Second, by adding up the total number of students participting weekly in some part of a group's program and dividing by the total undergraduate population at Harvard and Radcilffe, we arrived at the figure of 16%, representing a minimum estimate of the effect of organized religious activities on the life of the University community.

We say minimum effect for several reasons. There are many students who participate in these denominational groups on a less frequent basis, but it is manifestly impossible to estimate reliably their number. Furthermore, we could not take into account the number of students who attend Memorial Church on a weekly basis. Nor did we include attendance at small church groups outside Harvard Square and at the groups mentioned before which do not enter into this computation. There are also small groups in the Yard and in the houses which meet regularly for prayer and Bible study and discussion. The number and size of these groups vary, and at no time do they represent a very large proportion of the

undergraduate body, yet their existence has to be taken into account in estimating the total effect of organized religious activity in the college community.

The second aspect of our study was a survey of the types of activity available in denominational groups. In every case, the weekly program of the group was found to include worship and a forum meeting. At this forum the group presents speakers or discussions on subjects of interest to members of the University community, often dealing with the relation of the faith of the group to a particular contemporary problem. In the majority of groups, there are also weekly social gatherings and usually a weekly study program in which students and their advisors and often faculty members study the scriptures, the tradition and history of the denomination, and other subjects of interest to students. On a less frequent basis, three of the groups schedule work projects in which members of the group devote a day or a weekend to the service of some part of the community. Most of the groups also provide for small numbers of students to meet informally for recreation, additional study, or art-craft work. In every group, the clergymen associated with the group are available as personal counselors to students. This service is considered by the groups to be one of their most important.

More students attend Memorial Church than any other single religious organization, yet its activities do not reach the informal level, on the one hand, nor the sacramental level, on the other, of denominational churches. By tradition it is Protestant Christian, but the tone and content of its service vary with the Preacher and the times. Regular Sunday services are held in Memorial Church and daily prayers in Appleton Chapel. These latter are particularly valuable as they allow students to hear the religious views of faculty members who regularly deliver the short sermon. As in the other churches in the Square, the Preacher counsels students and performs marriages.

As Preacher to the University and Plummer Professor of Christian Ethics, the present head of Memorial Church, Doctor Buttrick, stands as the most significant link of the College with the organized religious world. Still, his position is ambiguous. He is an ordained minister, a professional pastor, and heads a church; yet because there is no link with a denominational group, there is no official channel of communication with other organized religions, no way of cooperation with them in matters of concern to both. Memorial Church serves all of the community and other religious agencies serve Harvard students, but no way is open for them to coordinate their programs and to help each other.

As the third part of our study, we interviewed the clergymen associated with each group and asked them to share with us their thinking about the nature of the University community and its particular needs and problems from a religious point of view. Their answers were, of course, various, but it is possible to sum up their thought as follows: In the first place, the student community has the same need for group worship as any other community. But in addition, it presents particular problems and challenges to the Minister to students. All the students fall within a narrow age group with a set of problems particular to that age group; e. g. for some there are periods of intense psychological adjustment to new found freedom and responsibility. The absence of old emotional, religious and cultural ties presents a real problem. For many this is the time when they first begin the often trying job of working out a coherent view of the world and a personal philosophy of life. In each of these instances, the minister to students finds great demand for his services as counselor.

The clergymen spoke of the practical difficulty of making contacts within the University administration and faculty. The clergy do their best to be responsible for the re-

ligious life of Harvard students, a responsibility tacitly left in their hands by the University, but they have no connection either official or semi-official with the University. This lack, they report hinders their movement within the University. Since the local clergy perform a valuable service for the considerable number of Harvard students who desire Church activity and pastoral counseling, it seems reasonable that the University should remove the hindrances to the maximal performance of their duties if it can do so without generating greater problems.

We suggest, therefore, that those clergymen whose primary work is with Harvard and Radcliffe students be given semi-official recognition. This recognition could be in the form of appointment to a Board of Religious Associates. They would be nominated by the Preacher to the University if they met the one qualification of working mainly with students. This criterion for appointment would give recognition to all who would benefit by it and leave no opening for charges of discrimination or favoritism.

We are assured by the clergymen that such an appointment would increase the efficiency of the service which they render to students. It would also provide a group of advisors for the Preacher to the University and coordinate his work with that of the religious groups in the Square. At the same time there could be no questions of denominational infiltration. This recognition would aim only to allow ministers to perform their present functions more satisfactorily. Of course, we would oppose any attempt to use this semi-official status to pressure students or faculty members or to expand widely church activities within the University. We do not expect that anything like this would ever occur

In conclusion, we commend the clergy in Cambridge for their intelligence and energy in meeting the religious needs of students. Their programs are usually thorough and thoughtfully regulated to the special character of the academic community. Many of these men meet together to discuss their common problems and no doubt this helps to raise the level of the activities of their individual groups. We hope that their appointment to a Board of Religious Associates would not only assist them, but would bring the Preacher to the University and Memorial Church in closer touch with these men and their work.

A DISSENT

At the meeting in which the proposal to appoint a Board of Religious Associates was discussed, a number of Student Council members protested warmly against it. It was argued practically that the ministers would be little helped by the appointment, but more fundamentally the suggestion was opposed as being contrary to the separation of Harvard education from denominational religion. The minority report of some of the people who voted against the suggestion is included here not only to allow these Council members to go on record in opposition and present their reasons, but as an indication of a body of opinion in the College which we believe is widespread.

THE MINORITY REPORT

In view of the fact that the recommendation for a Board of Religious Associates passed the Student Council by a 6-5 vote, we feel that the views of the minority should officially be made known on this matter. We share with the committee the conviction that spiritual guidance should be freely available to those Harvard College students who desire it. We also share the conviction of the Committee that Harvard, as a non-sectarian institution, should not be non-religious or anti-religious. Although our basic premises are

the same as the Committee's, we believe that a Board of Religious Associates would do more harm than good in the bringing about of our mutual aims.

We believe that the proposed Board of Religious Associates would be unwise, viewed both in the short and the long run. In the short run, we oppose the proposal for three reasons. First, if this proposal were adopted, the Corporation would be faced with the difficult choice of which ministerial personnel to recognize. The Committee contends that this would present no difficulty to the Corporation, but we feel that simply recognizing ministers to serve on the Board could involve some difficult discretionary questions. Second, the Committee does not have absolute assurance that representatives of all major faiths will serve on the Board at the present time, and has no assurance that representatives of all major faiths will continue to serve on the Board in the future. Third, any disagreements within the Board over matters of policy will be greatly complicated by the fact that members of the Board are representatives of different denominational groups; great misunderstandings may arise because of this. The handling of religious questions must be done with great delicacy. Harvard College must be above reproach in this respect, if our standing in the local, national and world communities is not to be jeopardized.

In the long run, we believe that the proposed Board of Religious Associates would not be in the best interest of Harvard College. Although the Board may assume very limited functions at first, in future years these functions could gradually increase, until the point is reached that Harvard becomes a theocracy. Once the precedent of an officially recognized clergy is established, it would be very difficult to limit its functions.

The Committee feels that the adoption of their proposal would allow the minister to "make contact and move freely in the University." We contend that no amount of official recognition can expedite these worthy aims; activities of this sort belong to the vast realm of human relations, a realm where official decrees do not apply.

Because we believe that the harm this proposal would cause far outweighs the good it will bring, we regret the action of the Student Council in endorsing it. We hope that the proper University officials will realize that this proposal is an inappropriate means to a very worthy end.

Kekoa Kaapu '58 (not present when vote taken)

Merom Brachman '58 (elected to the Council May, 1955, but not serving until fall)

Charles Edson '56

James G. Hatcher, Jr. '56

Paul Scher '57
(present and voting)

Chapter IV

RELIGION AND THE HARVARD CURRICULUM

Analysis

However dispersed the interests and values of Harvard students may be, they merge for a time on the common ground of course work. All students in one way or another are inspired, challenged or at least swayed by the instruction they receive in the class room. The way religion is treated in the courses necessarily affects deeply the religious tenor of the college.

In order to assess the role of religion in the Harvard curriculum it is necessary first of all to examine the aims of Harvard education and the principles under which it operates. *General Education in a Free Society* was published by the Harvard Committee in 1945. That same year the Faculty of Arts and Sciences approved the principles and program recommended in the report. Leaving the program to a later consideration, let us examine the principles of the report as they relate to religion.

Religion and "General Education in a Free Society"

The Harvard Committee believed "that a supreme need of American education is for a unifying purpose and idea." Under present conditions, they pointed out, the enormous variety of aims and methods among colleges seems to rob liberal education of any clear, coherent meaning. Such a meaning is not easily found because in our society there is no general agreement on ultimates. Consequently, the Harvard Committee rejects religion as an over-all working principle: "Whatever one's views, religion is not now for most colleges a practicable source of intellectual unity."

What then can the source of this unity be? The report states that "a common ground between some, though not all, of the ideas underlying our educational practice is the sense of heritage. The appeal to heritage is partly to the authority, partly to the clarification of the past about what is important in the present. All Catholic and many Protestant institutions thus appeal to the Christian view of man and history as providing both final meaning and immediate standards for life." This concern which religious education has for heritage is shared by education in the great classic books and education for modern democratic life. And if these three types of education are in a sense exclusive, "there is a far more important sense in which they work together to the same end." They share a "belief in the idea of man and society" that we inherit, adopt, and which it is function of education to pass on. Although this idea must be expressed in purely humanistic terms, the Harvard Committee is careful to define humanism in such a way as not to exclude the religious ideal. Thus, according to the report, religion has a place in education, but it is not central. The "sense of heritage" is the overarching, unifying element.

In its statements of the traits and characteristics of mind to be fostered by liberal education the committee touches on values which again bring religion into the discussion. The four abilities to be sought above all others are "to think effectively, to communicate thought, to make relevant judgments, to discriminate among values." The last bears most directly on religion.

Discrimination among values, according to the report, means not only awareness of different kinds of value, but of their relations, including a sense of relative importance and of mutual dependence of means and ends. The eventual objective of education, it is stated,

is not just knowledge of values, but commitment to them. Here, however, the Harvard Committee recognizes the danger of the college becoming a moral reformatory and stresses the complexity of the problem of moral values and character. "The college will have to confine itself to the Socratic dictum that the knowledge of the good will lead to a commitment to the good." The report recognizes that religion could enter the picture at this point, for it adds, "We are not unmindful of the importance of religious belief in the completely good life. But given the American scene with its varieties of faith and even of unfaith, we did not feel justified in proposing religious instruction as a part of the curriculum." While admitting that religion is pertinent to the concern for values in education, the report excludes instruction in religion from higher education.

The eventual objective of education, as defined by the Harvard Committee, is not just knowledge of values, but commitment to them. But if the college must hope with Socrates that knowledge of the good will lead to a commitment to the good, must it not afford its students an opportunity to obtain as much knowledge as possible of the good and of those convictions which have motivated men's actions? Throughout the history of western civilization, many men have accepted religious interpretations of life and found the way to the good through religion, particularly Christianity and Judaism. These traditions are a prominent and significant part of our heritage. It seems to follow, therefore, from statements in the report, that education should make the student aware of the questions that religion raises and the answers that it gives. Commitment is based on free choice, and choice to be truly free demands a knowledge of all the possibilities. Moreover, in the introductions to the Harvard Committee. President Conant stated that "unless the educational process includes at each level of maturity some continuing contact with those fields in which value judgments are of prime importance, it must fall short of the ideal." This statement certainly implies that ideally there would be courses in the curriculum dealing with religion.

Thus the Harvard Report appears to contradict itself by implying that religious ideals should be included in a liberal education and at the same time opposing religious instruction. The cause of this difficulty is easily discovered. The Report grapples with the problem of leading men to discern and choose good without specifying what the good is. There is no denial of the need for the discussion of religious thought in an education which teaches men to evaluate. But it opposes the domination of education by a single religious ideal or the inculcation of moral precepts. In short, it disapproves of preaching religion on the classroom while admitting by implication the value of teaching about religion. This is an important distinction and one that is frequently misunderstood by academicians. Many of them nervously expect teaching about religion always to lapse into preaching. Unfortunately, the fear of the one has led to the abandonment of the other in many curricula. Professors often feel that it is better to leave out religion altogether rather than run the risk of having men of personal zeal force some religious commitment on their students. Others are afraid of denominational squabbles arising if religion is discussed systematically. On these grounds, the Harvard committee justifies their unwillingness to recommend religious instruction in the College, despite the pertinence of religious thought to some of the goals established by the report.

Our interviews with individual professors reveal that practice in instruction generally follows the principles delineated in *General Education in a Free Society*. Discussion of religion is included where it seems relevant to the general theme of the course, but it is usually not treated systematically, nor is effort made to indicate to students its relevance to their own lives. For example, when the professor tells his students that St. Augustine placed great importance on the influence of God in his life, he does not expect his students' first reaction to be "'How important is God in my own life?" Rather he should

ask, "Why did St. Augustine think this way?" and "What effect did this have on his life?"

Of course, many students find that class material becomes vital to them personally. Usually, this is good and to be hoped for. President Pusey has written:

> "What every young person seeks in college, from liberal education—whether or not he has articulated this—is self-discovery. What he wants most to know is what it means to be a human being, what is expected of him as such, what the world is, and what are the options in it that lie before him, and how he is to get on with others."

If education is to have the profound personal significance that President Pusey suggests, then subject matter must eventually be brought to bear on the life of each student. At least some of the questions Plato, Augustine and Hume asked of themselves must be asked by each student of his own experience. Values must be discerned and knowledge must lead to choice.

In this process what part should the professor play? Most of the professors interviewed stressed that so magnificent an ideal as that expressed by President Pusey cannot be approached directly in any one course. Courses are addressed to the minds of the students, not to their hearts and wills. They give major emphasis to critical thinking about the important issues rather than encouraging the student to answer ultimate questions for himself. Many professors look upon courses as providing students only with the tools with which to investigate ultimate questions for themselves. If ever President Pusey's ideal is to be attained, they say, it will be in the synthesis within each individual of all the experiences of his education.

Religion in Courses, 1955-56

If a student is ever to deal with ultimate questions himself, he must possess the skills of critical thinking as well as adequate knowledge of religious issues and familiarity with religious thinkers of the past. What opportunities does Harvard offer the student to investigate religion and religious thought?

Of vital importance in any discussion of religion in the Harvard curriculum are lower level courses in General Education which are required of all students. All the Humanities courses, but particularly Humanities 4 and 5 deal in some way with religious issues. Humanities 4 entitled "IDEAS OF GOOD AND EVIL IN WESTERN LITERATURE," is concerned with "some of the attitudes expressed in important literary and philosophical works towards the problem of good and evil." Humanities 4 devotes two weeks to the *Old Testament*, two weeks to the *New Testament*, four weeks to the *Divine Comedy* and two weeks to *Pilgrim's Progress*. Humanities 5 entitled "IDEAS OF MAN AND THE WORLD IN WESTERN THOUGHT," is concerned with "major attitudes, ideas, and problems arising from man's reflection on science, the arts, morals and religion." Works read include *The Book of Job*, the *Confessions of St Augustine* and excerpts from *Fear and Trembling by Kierkegaard*. Both of these courses then devote considerable time to religious issues. However, they must of necessity be extremely selective in the material presented. For example, Humanities 5 does not include the *New Testament* which many would feel is necessary for a full understanding of the Christian view of man.

The other three Humanities courses also consider religious and theological thought. Students taking Humanities 2 read *The Divine Comedy* and *Paradise Lost* and deal, consequently, with the concepts of grace and original sin. *The Confessions of St. Augustine* is

read in Humanities 3. But these courses entitled "EPIC and NOVEL"; "CRISIS AND THE INDIVIDUAL, I: IN DRAMA AND BIOGRAPHY. II: HISTORY AND FICTION; and INTERPRETATION OF LITERATURE" are primarily courses in literature and treat the material from a literary point of view.

The courses in the Social Sciences treat religion and religious thought, but are concerned primarily with the relation between ideas and institutions, not with ideas in themselves. For example, the proofs of St. Thomas for the existence of God are examined not to see whether they are true or false but rather to see what elements of Thirteenth Century intellectual life made St. Thomas approach the problem the way he did. Social Science 2 and 5 have almost no source material directly concerned with religious ideas. Social Sciences 1 has readings from St. Augustine, St. Thomas, Luther, and Calvin as does Social Sciences 5, which in addition spends some time on the *New Testament.*

The Natural Science courses have little to do directly with religion, but do consider the interaction between science and religion. Two professors in the Natural Sciences who were interviewed stated that in their courses they considered the effect of science on theology, and not on religion, since science and religion operate on different levels and have no direct contact. Another professor, who feels that science and religion do have a definite interaction, said that his course tries to deal with some of the limitations of science. Professors agreed that many students had no idea of the relation between science and their personal religious beliefs and that it would be impossible to generalize what effect the Natural Science courses have on students. One professor remarked that whereas some exam papers would credit him with having proved the existence of God, others were equally insistent that he had proved the non-existence of God.

Religion then plays a considerable part in the lower level General Education program. But as a study of religious thought this program is limited by the fact that it is directed towards freshmen and sophomores and a primary concern must be for the development of critical ways of thinking rather than for a systematic coverage of any phase of religious thinking. Religious documents are treated as case studies in the history of significant ideas and the consideration of the religious world view as a vital way of looking at life is neglected.

Other courses dealing primarily with religious thought cover their subjects more systematically. The following are the courses on religion listed for undergraduates in the 1955-56 catalogue together with the number of Harvard undergraduates enrolled.

Fall Term (1955-56)	Spring Term (1955-56)
History 141 (19)	Humanities 125 (46)
Humanities 124 (101)	Humanities 127 (42)
Humanities 127 (43)	Church History 10b (12)
Church History 101a (49)	History of Religions 101b (54)
History of Religions 131a (5)	History of Religions 131b (3)
Ethics 111a (5)	Ethics 111b (7)
Philosophy 190 (11)	
Social Relations 164 (7)	

History 141—Religious currents in English Society 1730-1900
The role of religion in the social and intellectual history of the period.

Humanities 124—Introduction to the New Testament
The course will be concerned mainly with the exposition of the content and doctrines of the New Testament. It will also offer some background material including discussion of

manuscripts, the then-prevailing Judaistic and Graeco-Roman outlook, the Synoptic problem and the canons of the New Testament criticism. It will provide an introduction to each book, and attempt to trace its meaning, so as to enable the student better to understand the New Testament.

Humanities 125—New Testament Thought and the Mind of Today

A study of the teachings of the New Testament in comparison and contrast with the tenets of such modern writers as John Dewey, Bertrand Russell, Erich Fromm, Franz Kafka, Reinhold Niebuhr, W. H. Auden, T. S. Eliot and Nicolas Berdyaev.

Humanities 127—Religion and Culture

Consideration of the relation of religion generally and Protestantism particularly to human culture and its different expressions, predominantly in the Western World.

Church History 101a—Ancient Church History from 150 to 500

(Divinity School course)

Church History 101b—Medieval Church History from 500 to 1350

(Divinity School course)

History of Religions 101a and 101b

In this half course (101a) the religions of certain primitives, the Greeks (before Alexander), the early Romans, the Celts and India are treated. In this half course (101b) India, the Graeco-Roman background of early Christianity, the rise of Christianity, Islam and China are treated.

History of Religions 131a and 131b—Islamic Religion and Institutions

Ethics 111a—Secular and Christian Ethics: Ancient and Medieval

(Divinity School course) This course will begin with a preliminary study of the Christian ethic and its distinctive features. This will be followed by a critical analysis of Classic texts in Greek and Medieval ethics: Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, and Aquinas.

Ethics 111b—Secular and Christian Ethics: Modern and Contemporary

(Divinity School course) A critical study of Reformation and post-Reformation Theology and its moral implications for individual and social life. Modern interpretations of Christian Ethics will also be compared with influential secular doctrines such as Kantianism, Utilitarianism, intuitionism, and existentialism.

Philosophy 190—Philosophy of Religion

A discussion of some theories of the nature of religious belief and religious discourse. The views to be considered include those of Kierkegaard, Santayana, Otto, Cassirer, and Freud.

Social Relations 164—Sociology of Religion

An analysis of the interrelations between religion and societies. A conceptual scheme will be developed. Types of religious action, specialist role, organized group and cult activity will be examined, and a few examples of interdependence of major religious movements with social structure discussed.

The Divinity School

As a training school for pastors, the Divinity School holds little significance for the undergraduate and the College curriculum; but as a collection of capable scholars contribu-

ting to the aggregate knowledge of the University, it has great significance. Merely the presence in the University of men who can maintain strong religious views and, at the same time, command the respect of their colleagues on the faculty gives courage to undergraduates with a religious orientation who might otherwise be reluctant to express their ideas. It is difficult for a student to stand for a belief which apparently has no currency among the wise men in the community and which, when it is discussed in classes, is treated critically or passively. Divinity School professors become allies, albeit distant ones, of the hesitant undergraduate with a religious philosophy of life. Assured that his opinions are not disdained by all scholars, a college student will more freely stand up for his beliefs.

Not only is he given courage, but the undergraduate is more likely to examine his beliefs if religious ideas are articulated by faculty members somewhere in the University. If his ideas are totally unpopular or even disregarded, a student may pass them off, but he is not likely to give them a full, frank scrutiny, searching for their real value. There may be many faculty members with a religious faith, but if the tenets of their faith are not discussed openly somewhere, students will never come to understand how a trained mind approaches religion. Many undergraduates do not possess the tools to reshape their beliefs into more tenable form. In some cases, mature students can handle this situation alone or aided only by their pastors, but on all students there is likely to be a pull, separating religious belief from scholarship. The result can be to compartmentalize religion and withdraw it from rational inquiry.

Divinity School professors demonstrate this separation is not necessary. Their ideas filter through the university and form a bridge between the intellect and religious faith. Even if only a few college students and instructors have direct contact with them, theologians provide the stuff for many conversations at dinner in the houses. Public statements in courses and lectures by these recognized scholars lend respectability to religious thought and turn the minds of students back to reexamine their own beliefs. When religious ideas are being discussed frequently and sincerely, it is not possible to keep the totality of one's faith hidden in a non-rational sanctuary. Stimulated by suggested new approaches to religion, the undergraduate is encouraged to invigorate his own beliefs by comparison to the concepts of mature theologians and is offered methods of analysis and synthesis of religious ideas. Thus the presence of even a small number of active and challenging scholars in the Divinity School can potentially leaven the thinking of the entire university.

Important as this influence can be, it is nonetheless spotty and haphazard unless it flows continually through the formal channel of course work. At present only a negligible number of undergraduates enroll in Divinity School courses. Until recently, the College and the Divinity Schol have been almost completely cut off from one another. In addition to being in Andover Hall, a healthy ten minute walk from the Yard, Divinity School courses have not generally been of broad enough interest to attract many undergraduates. In evaluating the figures of total undergraduate enrollment in Divinity School courses on the next page, it should be noted that in each semester the large majority of students counted are in History of Religions 101a and 101b (or 1a and 1b as formerly listed), a course given in the Yard and listed in the undergraduate catalog. Without this enrollment the total figures for each semester would be considerably smaller. In any case, in a student population of 4500, the enrollment is in small numbers. They indicate that the formal connections between the College and the Divinity School are weak. The offering of courses by Professors Tillich and Wild in both the Divinity School and departments in College has been an important step in breaking down the virtual isolation of the Divinity School faculty.

Undergraduates Taking Courses At Harvard Divinity School

1954-55, 1955-56

FALL, 1954 - 55	SPRING, 1954 - 55	FALL, 1955 - 56	SPRING, 1955 - 56
Theology A No. Students . . . 3	Old Testament 1b No. Students . . . 3	Semitic 101a No. Students . . . 9	Semitic 101b No. Students . . 30
Old Testament 1a No. Students . . . 6	History of Religions 1b No. Students . . 82	History of Religions 101a No. Students . . . 49	History of Religions 101b No. Students . . 54
History of Religions 1a No Students . . 64	Church History 5a No. Students . . . 1	History of Religions 131a No. Students . . . 5	History of Religions 131b No. Students . . 14
Theology 4 No. Students . . . 7	Pastoral Theology 2b No. Students . . 1	History of Religions 225 No. Students . . 1	Theology 161 No. Students . . . 1
	Pastoral Theology 14 No. Students . . . 1	Church History 101a No. Students . . 7	Church History No. Students . . 12
Total No. Students taking classes . 80	Total No. Students taking classes . . 102	Total No. Students taking classes . . . 71	Total No. Students taking Classes . . 111

1954-55 represented a transition period for the Divinity School. Five new professors, including one University Professor, were added to the faculty; a new Dean was appointed, and the Endowment Committee passed the halfway point in its campaign to raise $6,000,-000. These achievements indicate that the Divinity School's aim to become a great center of religious learning may soon be realized.

In the past while the Divinity School has been in name non-denominational, it has generally been regarded throughout the country as a school for the training of Unitarian ministers. The New Center will be truly non-denominational in character. The following is taken from a recent Divinity School release.

> Faculty agreement has been reached on the important fields of study to be represented in the curriculum. These will be of interest to friends of the Divinity School. Not only do they reveal the emphasis on the non-denominational character of the New Center but they show the comprehensive concern the faculty has for all branches of the Christian faith, Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant, together with their historical relationship to Judaism and the other religions.

This expansion and broadening of the Divinity School has already had an effect on the undergraduate curriculum. The new upper level General Education course "Religion and Culture" taught by Paul J. Tillich, University Professor, is in part a result of this growth. Professors Buttrick and Wild also teach in both the College and the Divinity School. If the Divinity School is initiating a policy of sponsoring courses specifically for or of general interest to undergraduates. a more vital relationship between the Divinity School and Harvard College may be in the offing.

Chapter V

RELIGION AND THE HARVARD CURRICULUM

Recommendations

From our investigations it is clear that the study of religion and religious thought does not occupy a major place in Harvard College. Of the major fields of religious ethics, scriptural exegesis and interpretation, theology and philosophy of religion, comparative religions, and Church History, several have no place at all in the Harvard College curriculum, and others are treated inadequately. The Committee feels that the lack of formal study of religion represents a sizable gap in the curriculum and that it deserves to be studied in a more systematic way for the following reasons:

1. Through the ages the field of religion has represented a vast area of human concern. As a consequence of this concern fields of inquiry and knowledge have developed which are peculiarly religious in character; for example, theology and religious ethics. In trying to provide an interpretation of life, religion makes heavy demands upon the human intellect and has brought forth a wide range of inquiry in response to this demand. The field of religion has a long tradition of scholarship and our age has seen a continuance of this tradition in the scholars and thinkers who are trying to relate religious thinking to the expansion of knowledge in other fields and to the ongoing experience of human society. An area of learning and thought with the scholarly stature which past and present thinkers have given religion deserves a place in the curriculum of a liberal arts college.

2. An organized study of religion is necessary to understand the growth and development of all great cultures. This is particularly true with respect to Western Civilization. Modern institutions and the assumptions of democratic life can profitably be viewed in relation to the ideals of the Judeo-Christian tradition which lie at their base.

3. Religion is also relevant to questions which are of deep personal interest to many students. Of the 150 Harvard undergraduates answering our questionnaire, 60% said that they feel some sort of religious orientation or belief is necessary for their philosophy of life. Questions about the nature and existence of God are of "very great" importance to 44% of them. Another 35% said they are of "considerable, but not primary importance." The results of this questionnaire also show a direct interest in courses on religion. When asked under what conditions they would take a course in religion, only 14% said "under no conditions." There were 17% who wanted to take a course "under present conditions," and 21% if there were better instructors or a wider range of courses offered. There were 37% who would take a course only if they had more time. Extrapolating these results, 21% of the College is 945 students and 38% (the total of 21% and 17%) is over 1700 students. Even if discount is made for the smallness of the sample, there seems to be sufficient evidence to maintain safely that a considerable number of undergraduates show interest in courses in religion. Course work cannot always get to the heart of the most important religious issues faced by students, but if education is to be relevant to life it should, at least, acquaint them with what other men have thought on subjects of deep concern.

4. Religions present intellectually respectable world views which deserve a place among those discussed in a University. True freedom of choice implies an awareness and understanding of various possibilities and in questions of ultimate meaning and value, religious answers deserve to be considered as live options.

Teaching Religion

Courses on religion are basically like any other college courses. They have a specific subject matter which must be treated empathetically and critically. The study of religion is based on the assumption that religion has represented an important area of human concern through the ages and as such deserves to be studied with the same intensity, thoroughness of scholarship, objectivity, and maturity of approach as other disciplines.

The function of courses in religion is not to give a unified conception of reality, since in theory the liberal university rejects the attempt to teach a unified conception of the world. They should not proselytize nor attempt to perfect the student morally. Of course, religion is more than a subject matter; it is a total outlook on life. As such it deals with problems of value and meaning which frequently are of great personal relevance to the individual. But courses in religion do not aim directly at helping the student make a commitment; they seek to give him knowledge and understanding of the problems which religion raises and of the history and thought of the various religious traditions. Like other subjects, religion must be treated in an open and critical way.

The problems of teaching religion cannot be dismissed quite so lightly, however. There is considerable controversy as to which methods are best suited to this field. Some feel that it is almost impossible to treat a religious faith properly from "the outside." For example, it is felt that very few Protestants are capable of presenting the Catholic outlook in its full significance. Therefore, an attempt should be made to have beliefs taught by someone who accepts them personally. In accordance with this view, Columbia University has a minister and a priest on its faculty who teach their own beliefs. But if it is made a principle that religious traditions be presented from "the inside," a criterion for choosing instructors different from that of other disciplines is established for the field of religion. This procedure might lead to pressure from denominational groups. If denomination A is represented, why not denomination B? The net result could be, as it has been in the past, that no denomination is represented and that courses on religion are banned from the curriculum.

Others argue that the teaching of religion cannot fit in a secular university like Harvard with its long tradition of free and critical inquiry. If a professor is religiously committed to the material he is presenting, his mind is no longer open, and if he does not replace teaching with preaching, he will at least distort his material to favor his bias.

The Committee feels that the problems of teaching religion are essentially no different from the problems of teaching in other fields. Every teacher of the humanities must get inside his subject matter and with imagination represent a way of thought or expression to his students. This is the art and skill of good teaching. An instructor in comparative theologies, no matter what his personal beliefs, must try to explain several theologies clearly and convincingly. It not only would be impossible to hire an exponent of every religious tenet, contemporary and historical, but it is not necessary as long as men maintain sufficient objectivity to appreciate the weight of conflicting arguments.

We are confident that there are religious scholars who can meet the standards of good teaching and high level research. Men of this kind are the answer to the objection of religious bias distorting scholarship and instruction. While it is true that religious beliefs call forth a stronger and more pervasive commitment than most academic disciplines, men from the Harvard Divinity School and other theological seminaries could be pointed to as evidence that it is possible to engage in theological research and teaching, with or without a strong personal commitment, and in either case perform admirably as academicians. It

must be remembered that all instructors present their materials from a certain viewpoint. Slanting cannot be altogether avoided in any course. The fear that instruction in religious topics will necessarily transgress the delicate boundary between preaching and teaching (though no one seems to be able to locate it precisely) seems to be largely rooted in the memory of the old science-religion battle of the 19th and early 20th centuries. In abstract, the problems of objectivity for religious scholarship are no different than for scholarship in many other fields. The problem is intensified largely because many people are sensitive to the distortions commitment may give to teaching. These fears will be quieted, we believe, as the University becomes more and more acquainted with the work of good teachers and scholars in the field of religion. The important consideration in choosing instructors of religious thought is simply their competence as scholars and teachers. In this respect the administration of the field of religion in the college is just like that of any other field.

A Field of Concentration in Religion

It is our conclusion that the study of religious thought deserves a more substantial place in the liberal arts curriculum than Harvard gives it, and we wish to recommend a program to give it the position it merits. The actual mechanics of the organization, of course, are not nearly so important to us as the end result. Our major concern is that the field of religion be handled in courses suited to undergraduates in a reasonably thorough and systematic way. It should also be possible for undergraduates to concentrate in religion.

We suggest that a committee be set up to head the field of religion much like the committees in History and Literature or History and Science. This committee could be composed of men from the Divinity School, the Philosophy Department, and the History Department. Perhaps one or two men could be appointed to work in the field full time, as is the case in History and Science. This committe could decide which courses from the various departments would count for concentration. It could also see that the relevant courses in the Divinity School be listed in the College course catalog and, if possible, that some of these be taught in the Yard. Members of the committee could serve as tutors to those who concentrate. As Divinity School enrollment increases in numbers and quality, competent graduate students could assist also.

Establishing a field of religion in this way would be a relatively simple and inexpensive operation that could be accomplished in a year or two. For the large part, it would satisfy the desires of our committee that religion be treated systematically in courses and that it be possible to concentrate in the field. However, a full scale Department of Religion may be necessary. We make no recommendations in this connection, but merely point out some factors to be kept in mind.

Courses in the Divinity School may not be satisfactory for undergraduates; nor would we want the effectiveness of Divinity School instruction to be hampered by the presence of men from the College. Courses there should be kept on a level that will remain challenging and interesting to Divinity School students. At the same time, courses must be offered that are interesting to the undergraduate and which, in some cases at least, will draw connections between religion and the other subjects he is studying. Our desire for a systematic coverage of religion would not be satisfied if all the courses available were of such narrow specialization that they would be of value only to prospective ministers or theologians. Probably there is no serious conflict here, since middle group courses in many departments are open to both graduates and uudergraduates; and many undergraduates in their junior and senior years take courses which are primarily for graduates. But the

difficulties of presenting courses both to undergraduates and to Divinity School students must be taken into account.

Maybe separate courses will have to be prepared primarily for undergraduate.s Members of the committee could give three or four courses aimed particularly at filling the gaps. Once the committee is set up and undergraduates are allowed to concentrate in religion, possibly other departments will offer more courses treating religion from the viewpoint of their disciplines. Additional courses on religion, for instance, could be given in the Philosophy, History, and Social Relations Departments.

It is also important that undergraduate instruction in religion deal with the major strands in western religious thought; Protestant, Catholic and Jewish. The Divinity School is fundamentally Protestant and may not offer adequate instruction in all three traditions. We still hold that the only criterion for hiring professors to teach religion, as to teach any other subject, is their scholarly and pedagogic competence, but the most competent scholars in the area of Catholic or Jewish thought are likely to be members of those faiths. The Divinity School might not hire men in these fields. Thus the need for covering all the prominent traditions in our culture is another reason why a separate Department of Religion may be necessary.

The answers to these problems would be available after a few years of committee leadership. Then the number of undergraduates wanting to concentrate or take courses in religious thought would be known. The scope of courses in the Divinity School would be more certainly determined and any problem raised by the presence of undergraduates in these courses would have come to light.

Divinity School Faculty on House Staffs

We hope that allowing undergraduates to concentrate in religion would lead to a more vital conection between the College and the Divinity School faculty. With the growing power of the Divinity School as a center of religious learning, undergraduates can be much broadened and stimulated by contact with these scholars, if they are given an equitable share in the educational enterprise of the College.

One of the most important avenues for reaching a closer connection between students and faculty in any department is through informal meetings in the houses. If it is agreed that religious thought warrants a place in the intellectual makeup of the College, it is logical that instructors from the Divinity School be brought into the houses in some way.

We recommend, therefore, that some faculty members from the Divinity School be added to the house staffs in a way worked out by the Masters and the Divinity School. If it becomes possible to concentrate in religion, graduate students who are serving as tutors to undergraduates might be put on the tutorial staffs of some houses. All of the houses would benefit by non-resident senior faculty members from the Divinity School, just as they are benefited by faculty members from various departments of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

In the long run, this informal connection might prove to be just as important as course offerings by Divinity School instructors. Undergraduates testify enthusiastically to the stimulus of "dinner table education." It is in the general intellectual atmosphere of the houses where students educate each other that some of the most effective and significant learning in the University takes place. If faculty members from the Divinity School can make a contribution to this atmosphere, they will have a part in Harvard education at its most vigorous level.

SUMMARY

In the beginning of our study we asked the question, "What is the connection between religion and liberal education?" Our answer is commitment. Commitment is the essence of the religious spirit, but we contend that it is also central to liberal education. Every man is committed to something, but the free man understands his commitment. Only when men comprehend the relation of their own values to those of others are they prepared to defend themselves against the demands of society for conformity, and to look for better ways of achieving these values. Liberal education safeguards freedom by teaching students to understand themselves and their commitments.

But the concern of liberal education for commitment is more than for defense. It is our belief that the university can and should assist positively in the search for the Good Life, the highest hope of all of us. The part of education is to help the student find those ideals around which he is willing to shape that life. From the varied commitments of good men in all times and places, education offers alternative and the student makes new choices or reaffirms old ones. This process, inherent in liberal education, is the beginning of commitment, too.

Complete intellectual and emotional allegiance to a full set of values and a systematic view of the world usually does not develop while students are in college. But the materials for commitment must be presented and the foundations laid. Until an individual reaches some ultimate commitment which gives purpose and direction to his existence, and to which he is whole-heartedly devoted, his efforts are haphazard and partial; and his life will never be significant, fully satisfying, or free.

Liberal education, then, shares with religion its concern for commitment in individuals. Likewise, education must share with religion ideas about commitment. The university draws upon all thought in its effort to gain understanding, and where religious thought is relevant, it should be included. Religious thinkers have made fundamental contributions to theories of value and meaning, and the lives of religious men have demonstrated peculiar ranges of human capacity and depth extremely significant to the formation of commitment. Theologians are accustomed to treating life whole and in a fashion which bares new issues and uncovers new approaches to fundamental problems. All these experiences and ideas should be available to the student in search of truth.

Of course, religious feelings are usually ineffable and religious ideas are frequently controversial. The heated conflicts over religious doctrines in the past and the unyielding division of opinion among denominations today have made scholars wary of teaching religion in any form in the university. In a society where religious values are still prominent, criticism or even passivity can ruffle emotions and lead to disputes. Nevertheless, the importance of religious ideas to our culture and to the lives of individuals in it necessarily nominate them for treatment in liberal education. Students think about the most profound questions of their lives in religious symbols. Beyond doubt, their interest in religious issues is keen. To avoid discussing these things is to neglect a responsibility and an opportunity.

Discussion of religous ideas is sometmes avoided for another reason. Formal religion tries to build faith in men in ways contrary to the established methods of liberal education: by preaching, prayer, and exhortation, for example. Many teachers fear that the introduction of religious thought will lead inevitably to use of some of these methods in the class-room. It must not be forgotten, however, that religious concepts have a place in the mind as well as in the heart and spirit. Among Harvard undergraduates, probably

more than usual, religion is intellectualized. Religious ideas, when they are made conscious as they are here, can be analyzed, compared, and debated just like any other ideas. Religious thinkers use the language of reason as well as of faith and on this intellectual level can communicate perfectly well with scholars in other disciplines. In fact, it is on this level that religion and education overlap. Here religious ideas take their place alongside those of philosophers and scientists and are handled in the same way. Religion and the university act on separate planes much of the time, but on these grounds, where fundamental ideas about man and the universe are discussed rationally and dispassionately, they meet. And it is on these grounds that education makes its contribution to the formation of commitments.

The purpose of our recommendations is to enrich this area in which basic values and views of the world are discussed. In general, we support all teaching which leads to radical thinking, for we believe that from deep and profound thought grows commitment. But our report is about religion and, therefore, we have looked for ways in which religious thought can aid this process. Our recommendations propose mechanical ways of bringing students in closer touch with religious thought and the men who are skilled in handling it. These recommendations are easily summarized:

1. Ministers of all denominations who work primarily with Harvard and Radcliffe students should be appointed on the recommendation of the University Preacher to a Board of Religious Associates in order to allow them easier performance of their responsibilities to students and to provide an official means for Memorial Church to keep in touch with the church community in Cambridge.

2. A Committee on Religion, similar to the Committee on History and Literature, should be established to provide a more thorough coverage of religious subjects in the curriculum and to make it possible for undergraduates to concentrate in religion.

3. Divinity School faculty members should be invited to join the tutorial staffs in the undergraduate houses.

We believe that these recommendations, if followed, will be helpful. But we hope that consideration of them will not overshadow the underlying affirmation of our report. We believe that education can have bearing on the most immediate concerns and the highest aspirations of the individual; that it can take part in the formation of his understanding of the world and of his commitment to fundamental values. Our report is just the opposite of those angry protests so common today against the skeptical and corrosive influences of university education. We have been highly rewarded by our own educations, and our study has confirmed the opinion that Harvard is good for the faith of students. If beliefs are challenged, thought also is stimulated. The end result, in most cases, is a firmer and more tenable faith. Harvard does have an influence on religious outlooks, but in the main that influence is beneficial. Our hope and the whole intent of our report is to increase that influence in the lives of students; to make the imaginative consideration of learning relevant to the search for the Good Life.

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